

***Briefing***

***Stage 1 Debate***

***Transport (Scotland) Bill***

**April 2019**

**Introduction**

Age Scotland welcomes the introduction of the Transport (Scotland) Bill, which was a key commitment of the SNP 2016 Scottish Parliament manifesto and broadly welcomes the provisions within the Bill.

Throughout 2018 Age Scotland has engaged extensively with hundreds of older people throughout Scotland about the National Transport Strategy review. With the proportion of people aged 75 and over set to double in many areas of Scotland over the next two decades, and the number of people living with dementia set to rise, it is essential our transport system meets the needs of older people in order to be inclusive.

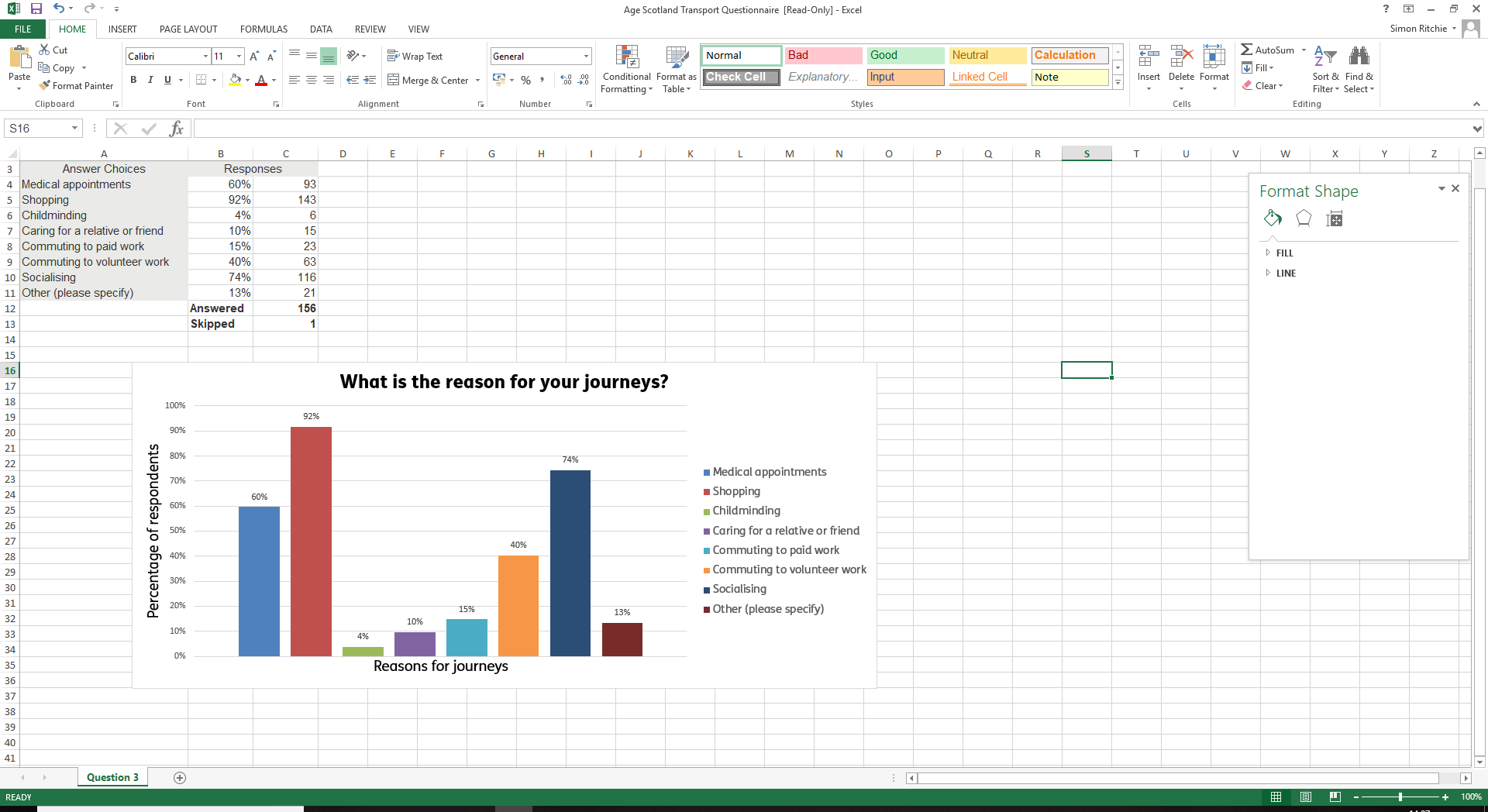
**Key Recommendations**

* We felt there was a missed opportunity in the Bill to cover Community Transport provision. This is especially important to older people in rural areas where there is less access to timetabled public bus services.
* We believe that the National Concessionary Travel (NCT) scheme should be extended to include all demand-led community transport.
* Whilst we recognise there are benefits of smart ticketing it is essential, however, that these initiatives are age-inclusive. Continuing the default to be a physical card for NCT will help to ensure older people are not left behind through digital by default policies.
* The establishment of the National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board is welcome, and it is important that older people are represented on this board to ensure we have a transport system that is fit for purpose in Scotland. Age Scotland would welcome the opportunity to share our expertise on this board.
* We support the provision in the bill to prohibit double parking, and parking on pavements. Further clarity is needed, however, on how this would be enforced.

**Community Transport**

A well-connected transport system can have a beneficial impact on people’s wellbeing and should be understood in a wider context than just getting people to their destination. It can help tackle loneliness and social isolation, and improve health outcomes, and benefit the local economy.

From our research we know from older people that they take the bus for a multitude of reasons such as meeting up with friends, attend medical appointments, to get to volunteer work, go shopping, and to fulfil childminding duties.



*Age Scotland Transport Questionnaire, 2018 , n=300*

Age Scotland does consider it a missed opportunity, however, that the bill as introduced makes no provision for extending the NCT scheme to all demand-led community transport. Many older people are simply disenfranchised from the NCT, particularly in rural areas, because there are no public bus routes or, where there are, only very limited timetables, or indeed inaccessible vehicles.

**We recommend that this Bill is amended to include community transport provision.**

**Responsible Parking**

Age Scotland believes that Part 4 of the Transport (Scotland) Bill is a crucial step in making Scotland’s streets more accessible. We have received calls to our freephone helpline which provides information, friendship, and advice about the issue of cars parking on pavements, making them difficult to pass for people with visual impairments or limited mobility.

Therefore, the prohibition of double parking would indeed be very welcome, however, Age Scotland is concerned how this measure would be enforced. It is essential that the effect of these provisions is applicable uniformly across Scotland, whether antisocial parking is decriminalised or not.

**Age Scotland recommends the Bill has further clarity on how measures would be enforced to prevent irresponsible parking.**

**Road Works**

When road works take place in any built-up area where pedestrians might walk, it is essential that pedestrians can make their way around road work sites safely. This means that diversions must be accessible, clearly signposted and dementia-friendly. If road works effect a bus stop, or a transport hub, it is important that passengers can quickly and efficiently find out, in the clearest terms, what they should do to avoid the works. It is also important that any scheduled roadworks on pavements or footpaths are advertised in advance so that people with limited mobility, sensory impairments, or cognitive impairments such as people living with dementia, are able to formulate alternative travel plans in advance.

**Age Scotland welcomes the provisions to enhance the powers of the Scottish Road Works Commissioner and indeed to improve the regulation of road works more generally.**

**Conclusion**

Age Scotland broadly welcomes the Transport (Scotland) Bill and the fact it gives Local Councils more power to improve bus services in their areas. Our research has found that asides from privately owned cars, public bus services are by far the most commonly used form of public transport amongst older people. We have, therefore, made several key recommendations which will help to ensure that Transport in Scotland will be able to meet the needs of older people. This includes extending the National Concessionary Travel scheme to include Community Transport, and that ticketing options do not become digital by default to ensure they remain accessible for those who do not have smart phones, or access to the internet.

Age Scotland looks forward to working with Members of the Scottish Parliament on this Bill to make sure that the older people’s transport needs are fully recognised.

***About Age Scotland***

Age Scotland is Scotland’s leading charity advocating on behalf of older people. Our vision is a Scotland where everyone can love later life. Our mission is to inspire, involve and empower older people in Scotland, and influence others, so that people in Scotland can enjoy better later lives.

Age Scotland’s Strategic Aims are to promote positive views of ageing and later life; help older people to be as well as they can be; and to tackle loneliness and isolation.

***For more information:***

Contact the Age Scotland Policy and Communication team on [policycomms@agescotland.org.uk](mailto:policycomms@agescotland.org.uk) or 0333 323 2400

Adam Stachura – Head of Policy and Communications - [adam.stachura@agescotland.org.uk](mailto:adam.stachura@agescotland.org.uk)